

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application with the listing of claims as follows:

Listing of Claims

1-30. (Canceled).

31. (Currently Amended) A processor-enabled method for providing a program price for the purchase of a vehicle fuel, comprising:

receiving customer expected fuel usage data;

receiving program sponsor data, wherein said program sponsor data includes an amount of a finder's fee paid by a program sponsor to a program operator;

calculating by a processor a customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price a customer is authorized to pay for any qualified fuel purchase from any qualified fuel seller, for a type of vehicle fuel, using customer expected fuel usage data, other customers' conditions and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data, wherein said customer expected fuel usage data includes a customer-specific quantity of fuel to be purchased and a number of months during which the customer is authorized to buy fuel at the customer specific, fixed, guaranteed program price for the type of fuel to be purchased;

using said customer expected fuel usage data, other customers' conditions and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data to develop a financial hedging strategy to diminish a risk to the program operator in connection with guaranteeing of the customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price in light of volatility of fuel prices;

ascertaining a program sponsor determined payment mode for providing said program price to said customer; and

storing said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price and said program sponsor determined payment mode for use in association with facilitating a purchase of said vehicle fuel.[[; and]]

~~ascertaining a mode of payment made by a customer said program price based at least in part on the program sponsor.~~

32-37 (Canceled).

38. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 31 wherein calculating said customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program price includes calculating multiple customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program prices for multiple geographic regions.

39. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said hedging strategy includes monitoring current market conditions and futures contracts pricing and conditions for purchasing [[a]] futures contracts ~~contract~~ on said vehicle fuel.
40. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a percentage discount to a current price.
41. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 31 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a capped price.
- 42-54. (Canceled).
55. (Currently Amended) A processor-enabled method for providing a program price for the purchase of a vehicle fuel, comprising:
- receiving customer expected fuel usage data;
 - receiving program sponsor data, wherein said program sponsor data includes an amount of a finder's fee paid by a program sponsor to a program operator;
 - determining a market indicator relevant to the future price of a vehicle fuel;

calculating by a processor a customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program price a customer is authorized to pay for any qualified fuel purchase from any qualified seller using the received customer expected fuel usage data, other customers' conditions and program sponsor data, wherein said customer expected fuel usage data includes a customer-specific quantity of fuel to be purchased, a number of months during which the customer is authorized to buy fuel at the customer-specific, fixed guaranteed program price and a type of fuel to be purchased;

using customer expected fuel usage data, other customers' conditions, said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data and said market indicator to develop a financial hedging strategy to diminish a risk to the program operator in connection with guaranteeing of the customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price in light of volatility of fuel prices;

ascertaining a program sponsor determined payment mode for providing said program price to said customer; and

storing said guaranteed program price and said program sponsor determined payment mode for use in association with facilitating a purchase of said vehicle fuel.[]; and]]

~~ascertaining a mode of payment made by a customer said program price based at least in part on the program sponsor.~~

56-60. (Canceled).

61. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 55 wherein calculating said guaranteed program price further includes using said hedging strategy.

62-64. (Canceled).

65. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 55 wherein calculating said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price includes calculating multiple customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program prices for multiple geographic regions.

66. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 55 wherein said hedging strategy includes monitoring current market conditions and futures contracts pricing conditions for purchasing [[a]] futures contracts ~~contract~~ on said vehicle fuel.

67. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 55 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a percentage discount to a current price.

68. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method in accordance with claim 55 wherein said customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price is a capped price.

69-114.(Canceled).

115. (Currently Amended) A processor-enabled method for providing a program price for the purchase of a vehicle fuel, comprising:

receiving customer expected fuel usage data;

establishing an affinity relationship between a program sponsor and the customer;

receiving program sponsor data, wherein said program sponsor data includes an amount of a finder's fee paid by ~~[[a]]~~ the program sponsor to a program operator ~~on establishment~~ in response to the establishing of ~~[[an]]~~ the affinity relationship between the program sponsor and the customer;

calculating by a processor a customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price a customer is authorized to pay for any qualified fuel purchase from any qualified fuel seller, for a type of vehicle fuel using customer expected fuel usage data, other customers' conditions, a projected retail fuel price and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data, wherein said customer expected fuel usage data includes:

an anticipated primary geographic fuel usage area,

a customer-specific quantity of fuel to be purchased, and

a number of months during which the customer is authorized to buy fuel at the customer-specific, fixed, guaranteed program price for the type of fuel to be purchased;

collecting said customer expected fuel usage data with customer expected fuel usage data corresponding to other customers to form an aggregate customer expected fuel usage dataset;

using said aggregate customer expected fuel usage dataset, other customers' conditions and said finder's fee amount of said program sponsor data to develop a financial hedging strategy to diminish a risk to the program operator in connection with guaranteeing of the customer-specific, guaranteed program price in light of volatility of fuel prices;

ascertaining a program sponsor determined payment mode for providing said program price to said customer; and

storing said guaranteed program price and said program sponsor determined payment mode for use in association with facilitating a purchase of said vehicle fuel.[[; and]]

~~ascertaining a mode of payment made by a customer said program price based at least in part on the program sponsor.~~